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REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful consideration of the subject patent application. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-7, and 10-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Hirota *et al* (US 6,233,925). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rejections.

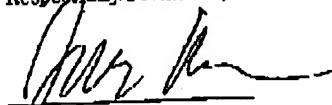
Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art reference does not teach any of the claimed limitations of the present invention.

In particular, the Examiner alleges that device 80 of Hirota is an oxidation catalyst coupled upstream of an emission control device. Applicants respectfully submit that Hirota repeatedly refers to device 80 as an S trap, not an oxidation catalyst (see Figures 20, 21, column 20, line 31 - column 22, line 34). Further, Applicants have not found even a single mention of an oxidation catalyst in the Hirota reference. Additionally, device 80 is not shown coupled upstream of any other emission control devices in any of the embodiments taught by Hirota. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Hirota is completely inapplicable as a prior art reference to the present invention, and withdrawal is requested.

No other art is cited in the Office Action. Based on the foregoing comments, the above-identified application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such allowance is courteously solicited. If any further amendment is necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable condition, the Examiner is courteously requested to contact the undersigned by fax or telephone at the number listed below.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this Amendment, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account 06-1510. If there are insufficient funds in this account, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1505.

Respectfully submitted,



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